United Nations S/PV.4720 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4720th meeting

Tuesday, 18 March 2003, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Fall	(Guinea)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mr. Valdés
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Schumacher
	Mexico	Mr. Pujalte
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Spain	Ms. Jiménez de la Hoz
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Howe-Jones
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

Proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities: threats to peace and security in West Africa

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03-28492 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Djangoni-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) took a seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): Before opening the floor to speakers, I wish to remind all participants that they must limit their statements to no more than seven minutes in order to enable the Council to work efficiently within its timetable. I thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

The first speaker on my list this afternoon is His Excellency Mr. Roland Y. Kpotsra, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Minister, I would like to extend to you my country's condolences and those of other Council members upon the death of our brother, Koffi Panou, and we would like to extend these condolences to your country and to the family of our beloved brother.

I now invite you to make your statement.

Mr. Kpotsra (Togo)(*spoke in French*): Mr. President, first and foremost, I wish to welcome your assumption of the presidency of this prestigious United Nations body during this particularly sensitive time when the world is wavering between peace and war. It is a sensitive period, because of tensions, conflicts and threats of war prevailing all over that are continuing or will not fail to cause many victims and destruction.

Sir, my delegation is convinced that this sad state of affairs in the world can only reinforce your commitment to the search and the strengthening of international peace and security.

In addressing these warm congratulations to you, my delegation would like to assure you that we have great confidence in your eminent qualities as a skilled diplomat to successfully conduct the Council's proceedings during this month when all are looking at the Council.

Mr. President, by including on the Council's agenda the question entitled "Proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities: threats to peace and security in West Africa", your country, Guinea, is once again demonstrating its unswerving devotion to peace, security, friendship and the policy of good-neighbourliness. Our Government welcomes this fortunate initiative, which again provides an opportunity to the international community to assess the crises in the subregion and to determine in the light of the assessment that it makes the best ways and means to provide West Africa with the political stability and security that it so much wishes, with a view to ensuring that the integration policy can flourish.

Before going any further, I should like to bring your attention to an excerpt from a speech delivered on Friday, 7 March, by the President of the Togolese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Gnassingbé Eyadema, in the presence of His Excellency John Kufuor, President of Ghana, the current President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), at the opening of the Third ECOWAS Trade Fair:

> "By creating ECOWAS, we sought an ideal to become fact: to build a vast common market for harmonious trade and development in a space of peace and security. We rightly think that the peoples and nations of West Africa are as capable of taking their own fate in their hands, to succeed in integrating their economies and to work together to ensure their prosperity, as have the peoples in Europe, America and Asia. We are aware that no development effort is possible without peace and security. Hence, we have decided to give pride of place to dialogue, working together and preventive diplomacy to avoid having conflicts distract us from economic progress.
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> "We have also come to understand that ensuring the free movement of people and goods — which is an essential component of economic integration — peace and security must be guaranteed to all member States of the Community.

"Unfortunately, like other parts of the continent, our subregion continues to be at the mercy of fratricidal conflicts that threaten development efforts and subregional integration.

"Day after day, the climate of insecurity — which began in December 1989 with the Liberian war — is spreading like wildfire. As if part of some domino effect, since 19 September 2002, Côte d'Ivoire too has been beset by civil war.

"That succession of armed conflicts is simply the direct result of the free movement of light weapons and of the recruitment of unemployed young people who are trained in ECOWAS member States to attack other member States. If we want such wars to stop, we must do our utmost to fully implement the Protocol on Non-Aggression we signed at Lagos on 22 April 1978, precisely to ensure that the territory of a member State cannot be used for the recruitment, training or arming of assailants who would attack another member State.

"Only strict respect for the Protocol will make it possible for our subregion to avoid the fratricidal wars that lead to the loss of many human lives, destroy property, maim people, drive millions of men, women and children into homeless exile and delay economic development and prosperity in our States."

That statement by Togo's Head of State conveys the steadfast nature of our country's foreign policy, which seeks to make peace, security and political stability the fundamental goals of its diplomacy. It is for that reason that Togo is working tirelessly to find a peaceful resolution to conflicts and to establish peaceful and good-neighbourly relations of cooperation with our immediate neighbours and with other countries. That Togolese presidential statement also demonstrates Togo's commitment to contribute as much as it can to ensuring that West Africa becomes a region of peace and an area that promotes economic integration throughout our continent of Africa.

The item on our agenda illustrates the fragility and precariousness of West Africa, particularly as a result of the conflicts in the Mano River region and the civil war in Côte d'Ivoire. With the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, our region has been moving for over a decade towards a state of instability marked by the length of those conflicts and by the scope of their humanitarian, economic and social consequences.

The end of the war in Sierra Leone led us to believe that there would be a climate of peace; but then Côte d'Ivoire plunged into turmoil. How could one explain that progressive extension of war from State to State in our subregion? Looking at the situation, one could say that the ease with which armed insurrection and war take place so easily in West Africa is due to the proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons and to the ease with which those who provoke such conflicts are able to find the necessary local and foreign human resources willing and able to undertake destabilizing actions, aggression and war.

However, that state of affairs can also be explained by the inconclusive results of two essential phases of the consolidation of peace. The first phase is the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants in order to strengthen peace; the second is the implementation of economic and social measures conducive to reconstruction and to reducing social injustice.

As the Council will recall in that regard, many measures were put forth to strengthen peace after the tragic conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, they did not meet expectations. The pledges of financial contributions to bring about the effective and seamless disarmament, demobilization the reintegration of former combatants and the reconstruction of economic and social infrastructure have generally not been honoured. It is therefore important to acknowledge that policies to re-establish peace have had very limited success, thereby promoting the proliferation and circulation of light weapons and the resurgence of mercenary activity. That activity has often occurred because former combatants and child soldiers are prepared to provide their services and expertise whenever conflict erupts or when there are uprisings against constitutionally established regimes.

Given the dangerous situation that has emerged as a result of the proliferation of light weapons, on 31 December 1998, the heads of State and Government of ECOWAS adopted a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa for a renewable period of three years. That was followed by the establishment of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and

Development (PCASD) in March 1999 as a body to support the Moratorium. Progress has been made in the implementation of those two mechanisms, namely, through the setting up of national commissions to combat the proliferation and illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, the training of armed and security forces and the collection and destruction of light weapons. All of that justifies the importance and utility of such bodies to our countries.

The essential goals of those mechanisms require that the international community further strengthen and make more effective its support through appropriate financial assistance that makes it possible for the mechanisms to better carry out their missions to deal with the problems caused by the flow of these weapons. The porous nature of borders makes it possible for such weapons to, among other things, nurture banditry, insecurity and cross-border crime. Similarly, the international community must provide considerable assistance to our States so that we can work to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was adopted by the United Nations Conference on the subject that was held in July 2001. A review of that Programme will take place in a few months.

Togo is a party to the Organization of African Unity's Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa, which was adopted on 3 July 1977 at Libreville. We are also a party to the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, which was adopted under the aegis of the United Nations on 4 December 1989. We are therefore very concerned about the use of mercenaries in the current conflict in West Africa. We vigorously condemn the use of mercenaries in conflicts, and urge countries and others involved in providing the services of mercenaries to end their activities for the sake of peace, security, friendly relations, brotherhood and cooperation among our countries. At the international level, the United Nations Convention against Mercenarism should be further implemented and adapted to deal with new pernicious forms of mercenarism today.

We are fully aware of the fact that the major objectives of ECOWAS cannot be achieved without first establishing lasting peace, security and harmonious understanding between our member States. Accordingly, Togo continues to attach special importance to the Protocol on Non-Aggression signed at Lagos on 22 April 1978, the scrupulous adherence to which will spare West Africa from the challenges posed by the wars it is experiencing.

In accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, the provisions of the Protocol stipulate that member States must refrain from threatening or using force against the territorial integrity and political independence of other member States. It also forbids States from committing, encouraging or supporting any acts of subversion, hostility or aggression against other member States. States must also prevent such damaging acts on the part of resident foreigners or non-resident aliens who are using their territory as a base for operations. The Council will agree with my delegation that the Protocol provides a basis for healthy political cooperation among ECOWAS States in order to decisively prohibit any actions that may impair their sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity.

We are convinced of the relevance and positive nature of the Protocol. My country would therefore like to reiterate what President Eyadema said at a recent CENSAD summit held in Niamey by the members of the Community of Sahel and Saharan States. He stated that every member State must fully respect and implement the letter and spirit of the Protocol, as the economic integration that will promote the prosperity and happiness of the people of West Africa depends upon it.

It is a fact that the proliferation and illicit circulation of light weapons and the use of mercenaries in West Africa poses a serious threat to international peace and security. Our States must act to further pool their efforts to eliminate these factors of political instability that are also capable of destroying economic and social infrastructure. Particular attention should also be given to the traffic carried out by independent intermediaries who facilitate the illicit trade in light weapons between manufacturers and armed groups. That must by achieved by strengthening national legislation in this area and by increasing cooperation between States in the field of border control.

Lasting peace and security, which our countries wish so much to see and for which they are actively working to lay the foundations, cannot be established unless the international community makes a genuine and determined commitment, through assistance that is

more sustained and is commensurate with our goals in the implementation of policies for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and the financing of peace-building processes.

There is also a need for relevant and rigorous measures to prevent the recruitment of mercenaries from the usual countries of origin and for the countries that produce and export weapons, particularly certain members of the former Warsaw Pact, to commit to a true ban on the illicit export of weapons to African countries in general, and ECOWAS States in particular. This is the only way that the States of ECOWAS can hope to stem the proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and counter mercenary activities, in order to preserve the peace and security that are so dear to each of our nations, and to assure the harmonious development of countries of the subregion.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo for his kind words addressed to me and my country.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are very glad to see you, Sir, preside over the Council. We thank you for convening today's meeting and welcome in this Chamber the Ministers for Foreign Affairs from the Economic Community of West African States.

Today's meeting is further proof of the great interest that the international community and the Security Council have shown in cooperating to resolve the complex problems of maintaining and restoring international peace and security on the African continent. It is proof of our common aspiration to work out effective strategies to combat the scourge of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities.

Russia firmly condemns mercenary activities and has consistently supported international efforts to eradicate this criminal phenomenon. Such services have become particularly in demand in the recent decades, during which armed mercenaries have been used in the struggle against legitimate Governments that had freed themselves from colonial dependence on certain States. Everyone is aware of the tragic consequences of the involvement of mercenaries in regional and national conflicts. We have become aware of them from the tragic examples in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Angola and other countries.

Mercenary activities are highly unethical and illegal, according to the generally recognized principles of international law. An important landmark in the process of establishing universal approaches to defining the illegal nature of this phenomenon was the adoption of the first Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions, which fleshed out the legal content of the concept of a mercenary. The entry into force in 2001 of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries has significantly expanded the means available to combat this scourge.

Without a doubt, the establishment of effective mechanisms to counter mercenary activities requires a corresponding measure of political will in order to consistently carry out international standards in national legal systems. Current Russian law includes special norms that carry criminal penalties not only for direct involvement of mercenaries in armed conflict, but also for activities for their recruitment, training, financing and other logistical support.

Recently within the United Nations there has been substantially heightened interest in the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and its impact on regional security. Of great significance in this regard were the 2001 Conference and the Programme of Action adopted at it. This summer there will be the first biennial review conference on the implementation of the Programme, which undoubtedly will facilitate the further resolution of pressing problems connected with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

Many practical questions related to the supply of small arms and light weapons, including brokerage, end-user certificates and others, will be discussed during the meeting of the group of governmental experts to be convened by the Secretary-General. We believe that the Security Council should focus its attention on instances in which the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons is directly related to conflict situations in Africa that are on its agenda.

The Russian Federation has consistently called for tough measures in cases in which weapons are supplied by illegal armed groups. We believe the Security Council is justified in imposing an embargo on arms shipments in conflict regions. This certainly will have a positive impact, and the examples of Sierra

Leone, Angola and other crisis situations have convinced us of this.

During the past years we have managed to fine-tune the oversight mechanism for monitoring the Council's weapons embargoes. This has been made very clear by the regular reports of the chairpersons of the relevant sanctions committees. Of course, much remains to be done, particularly to enhance the effectiveness of monitoring of the investigation of the facts of embargo violations.

We consider it justified that in the context of carrying out peacekeeping operations under United Nations auspices, the peace agreements between the parties should include specific provisions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. It is also essential to endeavour to include in the mandate of such operations adequate resources to collect and destroy illegal small arms and light weapons used in conflicts. It is important to help countries of the West African region to implement measures to monitor and combat the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Of great significance is developing practical measures to combat the illegal shipments of small arms and light weapons at the preventive stage and in the post-conflict phase of settlement. Regional organizations have a solid body of useful experience, including in Africa. We believe that the measures proposed within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — such the establishment of an information-exchange mechanism in the area of small arms and light weapons, the introduction of a regional register that would provide data on the national stocks of such weapons in the ECOWAS countries and other practical steps — deserve to be approved and supported.

It is also necessary to take steps to improve domestic legislation to stop small arms and light weapons from falling into the illicit trade system. Above all in countries in which such legislation is lacking, steps must be taken to upgrade and codify a national system of export controls and to establish a broad-based exchange of information between States regarding existing legislation and practical experience in this area.

We hope that today's meeting under your presidency, Sir, will allow us to move forward on all these issues.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Pujalte (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country is very pleased that you, Sir, are presiding over the Security Council today. We consider you to be a great friend of Mexico. We hope with all our heart that this workshop will be a success and that its conclusions will promote discussion in the Council on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, links with mercenaries and the threats they represent to peace and security in West Africa.

We have listened very closely to the opinions and proposals put forward by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the Interim Commissioner of the African Union, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the representative of the Chairman of ECOWAS, the representative of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, and ministers of West Africa on this situation. It cuts across all borders, because small arms and light weapons and their connection to the use of mercenaries exist in other conflict regions.

Mexico attaches great importance to the follow-up and full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Combat, Prevent and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in 2001, as well as the proper coordination of activities among the Security Council, including the design of mandates for peacekeeping operations; the other organs and programmes of the United Nations; and regional bodies and agreements with specific mandates to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Members of the Council periodically examine developments in the situation in Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. One of the greatest causes for concern in our discussions has been the excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons and their destabilizing effect on the region of West Africa, in particular on the countries of the Mano River Union.

We note that the illicit flows of those weapons have not been stopped, despite the arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council. We therefore call once again on all countries, particularly those countries that export arms, to comply fully with the relevant

resolutions of the Security Council. Similarly, we support accompanying all legal transfers of arms with end-user certificates as an effective tool for combating the diversion of, and illicit trade in, small arms and light weapons.

We encourage the States of West Africa to carry out the necessary steps for full compliance with the Moratorium agreed in 1998 on the importation of this category of arms. Those efforts, as well as compliance with the commitments entered into under the United Nations Programme of Action, will lead to a reduction in the amount of arms available to use by mercenaries.

The recruitment, financing, training and use of mercenaries are a cause of concern to the international community because of their responsibility for violations of human rights and the provisions of international humanitarian law, and due to their links to the illicit trade in arms and diamonds and other criminal activities in which they are involved.

Mexico is committed to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and has demonstrated its concern for that trade's links with transnational organized crime, the illicit traffic of drugs and international terrorism, as well as its negative impact on democracy and the development of countries. In that context, Mexico promoted the adoption of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Munitions, Explosives and Other Related Materials and was an active participant in the negotiations on the United Nations Programme of Action and on the complementary protocol of the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, prepared in Vienna.

Mexico is particularly concerned that the presence of mercenaries has been detected in the conflicts in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire because those activities not only contribute to the internal destabilization of those two countries but also constitute a risk for the stability and security of Sierra Leone, Guinea and other countries of the subregion. They also impede the access of humanitarian organizations and agencies to the areas where refugees and internally displaced persons are located.

We therefore reiterate the call made by the Security Council in the presidential statement (S/PRST/2002/36) of 13 November 2002 on the situation in Liberia, for States in the region to prevent armed individuals from using their national territory to prepare and launch attacks on neighbouring countries. We also support the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and the United Nations to put an end to the practice of the use of mercenaries, including child soldiers, in conflicts in West Africa.

I would like to mention the following suggestions to prevent, combat and eradicate the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries in this region of the African continent.

The lessons learned in the disarmament process in Sierra Leone should be taken into account in order to carry out similar actions in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The collection and destruction of surplus arms should be an integral part of peace agreements in the subregion. The supervision of disarmament and destruction activities by regional organizations and the United Nations will provide a guarantee for preventing excessive accumulations and the destabilizing effects of these weapons.

The international community must continue to support programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone, as the lack of financial resources has meant that a significant number of young people move to conflict zones in the region where they can obtain an income by taking up arms. The Security Council must support the use of programmes of that type in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

The countries of West Africa must strengthen mechanisms for political consultation in order to deal with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the phenomenon of mercenaries. The forums provided by ECOWAS, the Mano River Union and the Rabat Process must be used fully to benefit security, safety, stability and peace in the subregion.

The Security Council must take into account the regional context of the conflicts in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire and promote mechanisms of coordination and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in the search for peaceful solutions to these crisis situations.

Finally, allow me to express Mexico's appreciation to the delegation of Guinea for preparing and leading negotiations on the annex to the draft resolution to be adopted at the end of this meeting.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Mexico for his kind words addressed to me and for his suggestion.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is His Excellency Mr. Pierre Osho, Minister of State for Defence of Benin. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Osho (Benin) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to associate myself with preceding speakers in extending my sincere and enthusiastic congratulations to our brother, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea, who has the honour of presiding over this meeting of the Security Council during this delicate month of March 2003. This is especially so in light of the burning acuteness of the present international political situation, which, as everyone knows, is almost completely polarized with respect to the Iraqi crisis. To note the speech given a few hours ago, the holding of a workshop such as this ran the risk of seeming a non-event. But, very fortunately, that is not the case when you consider the number and the stature of the participants, in particular, the effective presence of Secretary-General Kofi Annan at this meeting's opening. I would also like to warmly welcome the positive inspiration of the Guinean Minister for Foreign Affairs — the President of the Security Council — to inscribe for reflection by this United Nations body this matter of concern for West African States — the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries.

Regarding the topic submitted to us for our individual and collective reflection, and speaking after a series of speakers, there are not too many new things for me to say. The essential things have been said, particularly by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, whose approach and conclusions, the relevance of his ideas, as well as the relevant statement of the honourable representative of the United Kingdom, I would like to publicly support.

Benin believes that we must stop making speeches on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Rather, we must look to specific and effective actions. In that context, Benin believes that we must act upon the source and the fundamental reasons for two scourges — the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries. Our specific proposals in that regard are the following.

We must establish an international convention that strictly limits the purchase of light weapons of war only to States and national armies, aiming particularly at the ability to trace weapons and at supplying them through official channels.

Secondly, we must put in place at the international level provisions related to the dismantling of bodies, firms and international networks that sell weapons that do not have the agreed or official status of an exporting State of these light weapons of war. Benin draws the attention of all participants to the fact that poor countries such as ours have neither the technology nor the logistics to sell or manufacture, or to organize the flows or the delivery of weapon stockpiles. Therefore, countries that have this technology and these logistics, both in terms of manufacturing weapons and transporting, shipping and delivering them, are, clearly, fully responsible in this regard.

Thirdly, we must put in place a United Nations convention for the dismantling of companies and agencies that specialize in so-called military-service-providing activities, which are nothing more than official mercenary companies, militias or private armies. These companies exist and are flourishing in the northern countries. In some southern countries, these companies have set up shop and have begun recruitment through legally placed advertisements. Why is that the case? Because today we increasingly are seeing actions recognizing these companies as providers of government protective services and protective services for official institutions, while in reality, these companies that provide lethal and destabilizing services are nothing but mercenary organizations.

Therefore, we must admit that henceforth our assessment of the question of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and of the use of mercenaries must clearly integrate the empowerment of States, holding them responsible, including groups of nationals, where groups of nationals have been identified as mercenaries. It will no longer suffice to invoke the personal freedom of individuals who have made the choice to engage in an activity, even if that activity is marginal, illegal or illicit. They will not be able to sidestep their responsibility with respect to the State. We will have to admit that individuals, recognized as mercenaries from a particular country, engage, at the same time, the responsibility of States

that have not been able to gain control over their institutions and nationals in illicit activities carried out abroad.

The fourth proposal is that the Security Council should put in place a working group that would design, organize and carry out a media counter-campaign at the international level, against the campaign that we have seen for a while now, a campaign which tends to extol or preach the decriminalization of mercenary activities. We read increasingly in the press — as I did on my way to New York yesterday — specialized articles to the effect that, given their weakness and their lack of money, poor countries are not able to organize their own security and that, as a result, it is legitimate that those States have recourse to certain services and agencies that specialize in security matters. Those companies, however, are the same ones that are the service providers for political groups that organize the destabilization of legal institutions within States.

My fifth proposal — and it is of a general nature — is to act upon the source of these two scourges. Acting upon the source means that it should be understood that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries have as fertile ground misery, poverty, the lack of a political system and institutional democracy, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and endemic underdevelopment that persists in most of the southern countries and in the subregion I come from.

As a result, the global problem of development assistance once again emerges. And, in the search for effective solutions to that problem, there is the problem of assistance to the armies and national police forces of underdeveloped countries. Today, cooperation agreements that have been concluded, whether at the bilateral or the multilateral level, generally and systematically exclude the police and the army from their aims, on the pretext that those are institutions of State sovereignty and that cooperation is limited to economic, technical and financial aspects, among other things.

But how can we create conditions enabling a national army to control the situation within a country's borders, to confront aggression and to protect State institutions, if that army itself is not a well-equipped army, a trained army, an army that does not function with respect for the constitution and for State institutions? The same applies to the police and the national police with regard to public security. As a result, it is increasingly appropriate to consider very seriously the issue of the equipping, arming and technically training national armies and national police forces so that they can become institutions that serve the rule of law and, if the conditions are such, so that we will naturally be able to lend enough help to the countries in which the democratic process is developing harmoniously, to assist the countries in which we observe concrete and significant efforts aimed at good governance. Because it is bad governance — marginalization of a part of the population, of the intelligentsia outside the political sphere — that creates frustration. Once again, that is fertile ground for the recruitment of mercenaries and of those who wish to take up arms to bring about political changes through violence and destabilization.

I shall conclude by expressing the hope that the necessary support will be provided to ECOWAS to enable it to complete the follow-up of the implementation of the Moratorium and all other oversight activities of the national commissions to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister of State for Defence of Benin for the kind words he addressed to me and for his timely proposals.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is His Excellency Mr. Jean de Dieu Somda, Minister for Regional Cooperation of Burkina Faso. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Somda (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to express to you, Sir, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March and on the admirable way in which you are carrying out your heavy responsibilities, especially during this period of difficult deliberations in which the future of the world is at stake. To those congratulations, the delegation of Burkina Faso would like to add its thanks for your excellent initiative to organize this workshop on a subject of great urgency for Africa and, more particularly, for our subregion.

Over the past few years, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has provoked and exacerbated a number of armed conflicts throughout the world. That situation has caused human insecurity that is

unprecedented in our history, with particularly grave consequences for women and children, the most vulnerable members of society.

By holding the largest conference ever on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in New York in July 2001, the United Nations expressed a universal concern over the threat that this scourge poses to international peace and security. The outcome of that conference certainly did not fully meet the expectations of countries affected by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, but it did enable the participating countries to establish an action plan. We must follow up those efforts with other initiatives aimed at ensuring the effective implementation of the action plan.

In that connection, Burkina Faso welcomes the forthcoming first biannual meeting to follow up the conference of July 2001, which will enable us to measure the progress achieved. As we await the recommendations that will result, the current debate should provide here and now an opportunity for the Security Council to renew its support for the worldwide process of combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Moreover, our subregion expects that the Council will support the initiatives already under way in West Africa for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

A new phenomenon has just appeared in West Africa: mercenarism. In fact, the recent crises that have arisen in the subregion have exposed this phenomenon and have shown that even Governments use them to deal with internal rebellions or to neutralize crisis situations. Mercenaries are a source of insecurity. They are not strangers to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; quite to the contrary, they facilitate it and are naturally active in creating a favourable environment for it.

By devoting today's debate to this issue, the Security Council is once again reminding all of us of our responsibilities and of the paramount need to observe the spirit and the letter of the United Nations Convention against mercenarism. It would be appropriate to send a strong signal to those who recruit and train mercenaries that they must put an end to that practice without delay and must refrain from engaging in it in the future.

Burkina Faso has always affirmed its wish for freedom and peace within its borders and in all other countries. But we must emphasize here that the armed conflicts and rebellions that have erupted in certain countries bordering Burkina Faso have naturally promoted the circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons from those zones into our country, spawning a certain kind of cross-border criminality and deepening insecurity for our country and for the entire subregion.

Our country's geographical position makes controlling our borders difficult, which requires effective cooperation with neighbouring countries to try to eliminate that insecurity.

To curb this situation, which we are facing on a daily basis and which is creating a certain insecurity both nationally and subregionally, Burkina Faso has taken an active part in the process that led to the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Arms in West Africa. That process was held on 1 November 1998 in Abuja alongside the twenty-first session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It is within this framework of searching for solutions to the problems of insecurity that Burkina Faso has given a lot of attention nationally, subregionally and internationally to all of the ongoing actions and meetings that might effectively contribute to combating the proliferation and illicit trade in small arms.

At the national level, a number of actions to implement the multilateral agreements have been implemented by the Government. First, in 1994, we received a United Nations mission to assess the state of trafficking of small arms in the Sahelo-Saharan zone. This mission, subregional in nature, also went to Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali. Secondly, in 2001 our re-reading of legislation on weapons and civilian munitions in Burkina Faso was necessary as the best means for combating all illegal actions in this area. It meant a hardening up of all measures and sanctions initially scheduled in prior texts. Thirdly, in April 2001, we established a national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. And fourthly, on 24 January 2001, we created a high authority to oversee importation of weapons and their use, which backstops the national commission's action to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons with information that can be provided as to the physical and geographical situation of those weapons that are imported. To show its commitment to

fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, Burkina Faso, in spite of its difficult financial situation, accepted the headquarters of the observation zone and follow-up group number two, the region which takes in Mali, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. The chief of zone in Burkina Faso has been there since 2001. The zone was formally set up in October 2002.

At the subregional level, Burkina Faso has actively participated in all meetings regarding the proliferation of small arms and light weapons held in the subregion, of which the most important meetings were a conference on conflict prevention, disarmament and development in West Africa, held at Bamako from 25 to 29 November 1996; a meeting of experts, held from 8 to 13 March 1998 in Yamoussoukro on the ECOWAS Mechanism and on transferred crime; a workshop organized in Accra from 19 to 21 November 1999 on the establishment of a register and a data base on small arms for ECOWAS member States; an Abuja workshop, held from 24 to 30 September 2000 on elaborating a programme to train the trainers of armed forces and security in combating the proliferation of small arms; a ministerial conference held in Bamako from 25 November to 2 December 2000 to prepare the international conference on the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects; and training courses having to do with border control and weapons control, which was organized by the United States Customs Service from 11 to 24 February 2001.

At the regional level, our country participated in a meeting of the African Group and experts on the illicit trafficking of firearms in Africa, held in Kampala from 10 to 12 January 2000, and a meeting of experts on small arms, organized in Addis Ababa from 14 to 21 May 2000.

At the international level, Burkina Faso actively participated in the development of three additional protocols to the Vienna Convention by the special United Nations committee in Vienna from 1999 to 2001, particularly the protocol on the illicit trafficking of small arms, their elements and munitions. Burkina Faso was also the first African country to ratify this protocol.

We participated in the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms in all Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 21 July 2001.

In conclusion, I would like in particular to emphasize that in all of these actions undertaken at the national level, the financial effort was made to participate in all meetings where the critical problem of combating the proliferation, exportation, importation and the illegal manufacture of small arms and light weapons was debated. It proves that, if need be, Burkina Faso has made a resolute commitment for 15 years now to combat this scourge by all possible means.

My country remains convinced that the fight against the proliferation of small arms cannot be conducted only at the regional or subregional level, or even only at the national level. The chances for success reside solely in the cooperation and synergy of action on the part of the entire international community. The ECOWAS Moratorium shows the strong will of a subregion to pool its potential to combat this scourge that claims many victims each day in its civilian populations. But we cannot succeed without the logistic and financial support from our development partners.

And so the Security Council, in a unique way, has a critical role to play and should become involved in helping to eradicate this phenomenon that undermines the foundation of development — the basis of peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister of Burkina Faso for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. De la Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Sir, I would like to thank you for having chosen to draw the Security Council's attention to the question of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities and to have organized this workshop with the Ministers, delegations, States of the subregion and representatives of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Since this morning, the debate has shown that these two scourges are everywhere, but they have a particular impact on West Africa, and they threaten peace and security. They undermine economic development, are at the heart of many excesses, and contravene human rights. These two threats are most often linked. Mercenaries and other armed groups profit from easy access to illicit trafficking in small arms in order to acquire large quantities of weapons at

often ridiculously low prices; and, therefore, they maintain their ability to harm.

We also see in post-conflict situations, in the context of fragile peace efforts, that if these phenomena are not overcome in time, they remain an ongoing impediment to strategies for peace, demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants. In fact, we have seen that mercenaries, once present in a war economy based most often on the exploitation of lucrative natural resources, such as diamonds, drugs or other illicit trafficking, have no trouble at all in recruiting their troops and in acquiring enough small arms to continue their nefarious activity.

Another point that these two things have in common is that they have a trans-border character. We see the ground and air routes that are used by traffickers of small arms that criss-cross the subregion and the groups of mercenaries. These activities know no boundaries. They use country X as a base for their atrocities, and then they gradually export conflict and war economy to the entire subregion.

I would first like to talk about mercenary activities and then small arms and light weapons, since they are related phenomena. For convenience's sake, I will distinguish between them in my statement.

Thousands of combatants, often completely out of control, are traversing the conflict areas of the subregion — from Liberia to Sierra Leone and throughout Côte d'Ivoire. These are mercenaries without borders who leave in their wake only destruction, atrocities, theft, murder, rape and attacks of all kinds, including those carried out in Sierra Leone by so-called "short sleeves" and "long sleeves". We must therefore ask why this phenomenon occurs more frequently in West Africa than it does elsewhere. I would offer one explanation: the first civil war in Liberia.

Combatants in that bloody conflict were never re-integrated into society, or even disarmed. The international community was not up to the task of its responsibilities. A number of those combatants merely reconstituted themselves into the conflict in Sierra Leone, either as rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (RUF) or as part of the Civil Defence Force (CDF) militia. As far as the RUF is concerned, they undoubtedly received support from the Government of Liberia, as the reports of the Groups of Experts on Sierra Leone and Liberia have pointed out. The Security Council reacted by imposing sanctions against the Government of Liberia. Resolution 1343 (2001), which was renewed as resolution 1408 (2002), demanded that the Liberian authorities cut off all ties with the RUF. That decision was necessary but insufficient. Those mercenaries will not disappear, despite the disappearance of the RUF as a rebel army.

Today it is mostly Liberian mercenaries — but also mercenaries from Sierra Leone — who are clashing in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire. That is an inter-Liberian conflict, and not one between the people of Côte d'Ivoire. Those mercenaries are impeding the return to peace. Let us not forget that the ceasefire is being respected in the rest of the country.

The international community must take action in the face of this a phenomenon, and France is determined to do its share. What, then, should we do? The first obligation when confronting the use of mercenaries is to contain them with an effective military presence. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, has referred to "robust peacekeeping", which is a very good English phrase. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) employed robust peacekeeping successfully against the RUF. French troops are doing the same today in Côte d'Ivoire against the rebel movements in the western part of the country. But robust peacekeeping is only an initial phase. The only long-term solution entails real disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes. In Sierra Leone the United Nations has thus demobilized and reintegrated over 46,000 combatants. Liberia must be the next field of action. There is no other way to avoid other countries in the region being convulsed by conflict similar to that which is unfortunately taking place today in Côte d'Ivoire.

I would now like to say a few words about combating the illicit traffic in small arms. We need to take action at the national, regional and international levels in order to eradicate illicit markets and the destabilizing supply of small arms and light weapons in the West African subregion.

In September 1999, France launched an initiative to conclude an international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons. Our goal was to identify the illicit traffic in these weapons. My country is pleased with the work that has been done —

on the basis of joint proposals submitted by France and Switzerland — by the United Nations Group of Experts on this subject with regard to the feasibility of this type of international instrument. We hope that there will be long-term negotiations for an international convention in this field.

France would like to emphasize the importance of producing States having a responsible attitude. If they have not yet done so, they must without delay adopt stringent legislation on export controls.

All of these essential measures are currently being implemented or explored as part of the Programme of Action adopted by the first United Nations Conference on the Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in July 2001. The biennial conference to be held in July will provide an opportunity for an initial examination of the work under way. Another meeting, to be held in 2005, will allow us to begin preparations for the 2006 review conference. The Security Council has supported these efforts, as it and the international community should in fact do with regard to efforts under way in the subregion.

In that regard, my country has from the beginning supported the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, which was adopted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Last February, France announced the renewal of its contribution to the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED), which is managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Programme has the specific task of supporting the implementation of the Moratorium. In addition, since 2000, France has supported the operations of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament at Lomé.

The effectiveness of the Moratorium must nevertheless be strengthened, especially as regards establishing exemptions and an end-user certificate that cannot be forged. France hopes that the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS will limit requests for import exemptions made by States to the legitimate security needs of those countries.

On this issue, I would like to know the assessment of partners as regards the progress made in the implementation of the Moratorium and the proposals made to strengthen its effectiveness.

Assistance provided within the PCASED framework to implement the ECOWAS Moratorium has a special role in operational activities. Those activities pertain to the establishment by each State participating in the Moratorium of a national commission and a small arms register. It also entails their training security forces, harmonizing legislation and collecting and destroying confiscated weapons. We have concluded that the results achieved are encouraging. Twelve national commissions have been set up in the 15 participating countries. Nevertheless, additional efforts will have to be made in order that the commissions are truly able to begin their work.

I have one final question for the representatives of the Secretary-General.

The West African subregion is obviously being threatened by a number of conflicts, in particular by the two on our agenda today: the proliferation of small arms and the use of mercenaries. Would it then not be worthwhile for the Secretariat to prepare for the Council a report on the specific risks that exist in this region — as Mr. Annan himself suggested in his report of the summer of 2001 on the issue of conflict prevention? Such a report could highlight the trans-border dimensions of conflicts that are already on the Council's agenda. It would also be based on relevant information at the disposal of the Secretariat and various actors on the ground, such as UNDP. In particular, the report could focus on the problem of small arms and light weapons and of mercenary activities, even if other questions — particularly humanitarian ones, for example — would also be part of that discussion.

I think that this work would facilitate the follow-up on this important question that is being considered by the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of France for his kind words addressed to me.

Before calling upon the next speaker, I would like to ask the Regional Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development to react briefly to some questions that were raised by the representative of France.

Mr. Sall (*spoke in French*): I would simply like to add a small note to the statement of the representative of France, by saying that indeed it has been some time since we last communicated with his country, when our Programme noted 12 national commissions out of 15. We have moved a step forward since then, with a national commission set up in Benin. We therefore now count 13 national commissions out of 15.

As for the functioning of national commissions, once decrees have been signed by the Presidents of the Republic, and ministers or heads of Government have established national commissions, we plan to immediately make financial resources available so they can start their activities. Once the documents have been adopted and executive action has been taken, we plan to immediately finance the national commissions so that they may become operational.

A second point that I believe should be remembered is the final-use certificates. This question frequently comes up, and there has been the possibility of falsifying those certificates. Therefore, what I would like to propose for the coming months in the review in our programme of activity — we do have joint reviews carried out by PCASED and ECOWAS — is to have included on our agenda a review of the end-user certificate to improve it and make it more reliable to meet the problems just raised.

Concerning the specific risks in the subregion, there was a meeting of UNDP resident representatives no more than a month ago in Dakar, after which the idea was adopted of carrying out a study on future security risks in the subregion that would be coordinated with the representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in West Africa, Mr. Ould-Abdallah.

These are all issues that are currently being addressed, and I am pleased that France put its finger precisely where needed. I would not say on a sore spot.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Regional Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development for his clarifications.

Mr. Acuña (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the holding of this public debate organized as a workshop, a format that is used to deal with topics that are the subject of paramount concern in the Council and the international community because of their relevance in humanitarian, peace and security fields and in the development of peoples.

Chile cannot but share the deep concern about the impact of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in conflicts besetting West Africa and of the increasing illicit intervention of mercenary forces in such conflicts. Those practices contribute considerably to the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, both among the combatants and the affected civilian populations.

In this connection, as was clearly stated this morning by the Secretary-General, the question of the involvement of children in armed conflict acquires a particularly serious prominence. We associate ourselves with his appeal that States of the subregion implement the international instruments prohibiting such practices and develop the necessary machinery to deal with the problem.

As we said in the high-level debate at the United Nations Conference in 2001 on the illicit trafficking in such weapons, we believe it indispensable not only for regions such as West Africa but also for the entire international community to lay down norms to restrict severely the manufacture and trade of small arms and light weapons, to duly registered manufacturers and duly authorized trading agents. In this connection, we are convinced that we must give pride of place to restrictions over freedom of commerce.

With regard to the question of supplying small arms to West Africa, Chile supports the initiative of shoring up cooperation and the exchange of information among States of the region to identify and monitor individuals and entities that are involved in the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and those who are supporting mercenary activities in West Africa.

Similarly, my country recognizes that States of the region must commit themselves more profoundly to the practical implementation of the Moratorium on small arms and light weapons declared in 1998 by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). To that end, particular account must be taken of the recommendations of the recent African conference on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons of 2001.

From the global standpoint, the Security Council, with the assistance of the Secretariat, over years has developed a set of measures to avoid at least in part the devastating consequences of the excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons and their illicit trade by means of measures entailing embargoes on territories where there is conflict and in cases of conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations or peace-building activities.

My delegation would like to thank the President for organizing this seminar, which has enabled us to exchange views in our search for effective solutions to tackle this scourge that is so seriously affecting the region of West Africa. The workshop format used on this occasion, as well as the quality and suitability of the Ministers for Foreign Relations and the other speakers invited to participate have given us a very comprehensive, first-hand picture of the situation and the needs of West Africa. Those elements will enable the Security Council and the Secretariat, as well as Member States, to better prepare their work on those sensitive issues.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Chile for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (spoke in Arabic): We are pleased to see you, Sir, once again, within two weeks, presiding over an important meeting. We would also like to thank you for your initiative, which led to putting this item on the agenda this month, in view of its importance in many parts of the world, and especially West Africa. It is our pleasure to welcome the Ministers and the representatives of the regional organizations who are with us today.

Today's meeting is one in a series of important meetings held by the Security Council on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the phenomenon of mercenaries, in view of their negative effects on West Africa. In that context, we would like to confirm the need to respect international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of Members States, the right to individual or collective self-defence as stipulated by Article 51 of the Charter, the right of peoples to self-determination and the right of Member States to develop their own defence systems to guarantee their national security.

The international community's adoption of the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July 2001 was an important step forward in dealing with one of the most urgent problems confronting international peace and security: the tragedy of the unruly and excessive proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the illicit trafficking of them. Those are among the most important reasons for the continuation and the fanning of conflicts all over the world. The illicit trade in small arms, especially in West Africa, adds to the violence and contributes to the displacement of innocent people, spreads the culture of violence and undermines the stability of societies. It also undermines the efforts at peace and negotiations, victimizes children, women and vulnerable groups in particular, and creates a climate propitious to the looting of valuable minerals, especially in West Africa.

My delegation believes that the way to deal with this question in general, and in West Africa in particular, lies in encouraging measures designed to restore peace, security and confidence among countries so that resorting to weapons is made less necessary; in promoting measures to prevent conflicts and seeking negotiated solutions; and in taking all necessary measures to control the circulation of small arms and light weapons and their possession, use, transfer and stockpiling. A mechanism must be established to stop the exportation of small arms to non-State entities, such as combatants and mercenaries, and sanctions must be imposed on manufacturers, arms traffickers and middlemen who do that.

We need to give financial and technical support to national programmes aimed at reintegrating the demobilized combatants and those illicitly possessing small arms.

With respect to the question of mercenaries, my delegation believes that armed conflict, illicit trafficking and covert operations by third countries lead, inter alia, to an increase in the demand for mercenaries in the international market. It is part of supply and demand. The recruitment, financing, training and use of mercenaries are part of this. It is a great cause of concern to all countries. It is also a violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The General Assembly and the Security Council have adopted many resolutions condemning the use of mercenaries as a form of external interference in the internal affairs of States in cases where the purpose is to undermine the stability of such countries and to violate their territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty. The relevant United Nations resolutions have emphasized the need to prevent the training, financing and recruitment of mercenaries and their being sent from one country to another. They also underline the need not to offer them any facilities, including financing, in order to equip them and to give them the opportunity to go to other countries. Those resolutions describe the use of mercenaries against national liberation movements struggling against colonialist domination or other forms of foreign occupation as a crime.

The political problems and disputes among neighbouring countries, especially in West Africa, have led to armed conflicts, and the presence of mercenaries is a recognized fact in all these conflicts. That has led to barbaric actions and the continuation of wars. Although the phenomenon of mercenaries is not limited to West Africa, Africa is the continent where it has continued and has done the most harm. We have heard many ministers and representatives confirm that.

Many armed conflicts in Africa are the result of extended political instability and the presence of valuable natural resources that other foreign entities try to control by encouraging and arming their allies within those countries so that they can take power. Later, such acts are carried out by mercenaries who have the individual military skills or by what are called military security companies, which use well-organized small armies of mercenaries in order to calm the situation in any of those countries. It is wrong to think that such private military security companies can help in managing the affairs of the countries in which they operate.

The problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries threatens peace and security in West Africa and other parts of the world. My delegation believes that discussion of this problem in its general framework definitely applies to this important part of the African continent. There is no doubt that we should follow up the question closely and draw the necessary lessons from what has happened in those lands.

Finally, we believe that cooperation with regional and subregional organizations is essential for the achievement of the United Nations objectives of peace and security in West Africa, in all parts of Africa as a whole and in the entire world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is Her Excellency Mrs. Senn, Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of Mali. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Senn (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I wish, at the outset, to express, on behalf of the delegation of Mali, my warmest thanks to the delegation of the sister Republic of Guinea for this initiative of convening this Security Council workshop to consider an issue that has been a concern to our subregion for almost 10 years. I am referring to the circulation of small arms. I wish to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts in dealing with that matter. My delegation also thanks the various institutions combating the proliferation of light weapons, and it fully agrees with their analysis.

First I wish to briefly refer to two major initiatives that my country has taken on the issue of small arms and light weapons. In 1994, the President of Mali at that time, His Excellency Mr. Alfa Omar Konaré, called for and obtained from the Secretary-General a study on the risks inherent in the illicit circulation of small arms in the Sahelo-Saharan subregion. A year later that led to a United Nations resolution on small arms, which has become a resolution of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on assistance to States to halt the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons and to collect and destroy light weapons.

Secondly, I wish to recall our initiative, subsequently approved by ECOWAS, that a Moratorium be adopted on the import and export of small arms. Speaking about the Moratorium and its characteristics, President Konaré said "In the mind of Malian diplomacy, the Moratorium is not a legal ban designed to infringe on the sovereignty of States and their freedom to provide defence, but rather it is an act of faith showing the world the unswerving political commitment of our States to eradicate the accumulation of death and destruction-dealing devices,

to pursue the economic and social development of our peoples that have been so sorely tested. It is an act of diplomatic intelligence leading to self-censorship, restraint, the temporary abstention of States of the subregion from producing, receiving or exporting weapons, as a necessary preliminary stage to reinforce means of effective security and take positive action related to micro-disarmament in subsequent phases".

Support for the Moratorium is voluntary and is open not only to States of the subregion, but also to all African States. The Moratorium is essentially a confidence-building measure relating to the import, export and manufacture of small arms. To enhance the effectiveness of that Moratorium and to reinforce the capacity of concerned Governments to exercise stricter monitoring of small arms traffic, Governments may take additional steps. The Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development is an additional device that was adopted. I will not dwell on that programme, which was addressed in a statement this morning.

Five years have elapsed since the adoption of the ECOWAS Moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of light weapons. In announcing the Moratorium on 31 October 1998, the heads of State of the Community decided to harm themselves by refraining from importing, exporting or manufacturing small weapons for three years. Those three years would then be used to draw up an inventory of the national arsenal, to create national and community registers. That period was designed to enable the various ECOWAS members to take the steps necessary to protect borders and prevent the illicit circulation of small arms. At the end of that three-year period, an assessment reinforced the conviction of the heads of State that they made the right choice in renewing the Moratorium for three more years.

It is obvious that as long as there is illicit proliferation of small arms in the subregion, peace in ECOWAS will always be precarious. Without being the cause of conflict, small arms nonetheless contribute to exacerbating them. Brawls and small disputes among neighbours, farmers and ranchers frequently become armed conflicts among socio-professional groups or ethnic groups and can spawn civil war or genocide. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons underlies the phenomenon of child soldiers. The massive accumulation of small arms and light weapons has meant that supply exceeds demand. That means that supplies of arms and munitions are very plentiful in times of armed conflict.

The implementation of the Moratorium has made it possible to reduce the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion, with the participation of arms manufacturers. While the circulation of weapons has been slowed down, there are nonetheless 8 million weapons in West Africa remaining in the hands of illegal owners. To prevent any possibility of their misuse, it is necessary to recover these illicit weapons that are illegally held, which contribute to banditry, the creation of armed gangs, criminal cross-border activities and the use of mercenaries. Over the long term, if their firepower permits it, those armed gangs regroup and form mercenary armies willing to do anything to threaten the peace and security of other countries. That is the situation prevailing in our subregion. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire is a perfect illustration of that.

As can be noted, all armed conflicts occur when one party or another feels that it can engage in an armed battle after having stockpiled arms and munitions that they can use or that they have received through a deal with mercenaries. Despite international legal instruments prohibiting the use of mercenaries, it must be noted that they are still relevant because they are now using new information technology, such as the Internet.

To improve the situation of small arms in relation to the use of mercenaries, my delegation would like to make the following suggestions. Embargoes against all countries to a conflict might be envisaged, as could preventive measures imposed against countries responsible for the illicit traffic of weapons. Also of value would be a binding resolution prohibiting the use of mercenaries in all its forms. The provision of additional support to national commissions combating the illicit proliferation of small arms in order to establish additional development projects might also be envisaged.

Unfortunately, our subregion, once a haven of peace, is afflicted by this fever, which is rooted in poverty, unequal distribution of justice, joblessness, unequal distribution of income, bad governance and, finally, a deficit in democracy.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Mali for the kind words she addressed to me and for her suggestions.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I should like to tell you once again, Sir, how pleased I am to see you presiding over the work of the Security Council.

I believe that the Guinean presidency was right to keep this workshop on the "Proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities: threats to peace and security in West Africa" in this month's programme of work. It not only concerns an important problem for the subregion, but also, in my delegation's view, is a way of emphasizing the importance that the Council attaches to African issues at a time when all eyes are, of course, turned towards Iraq. Congratulations, therefore, on such tenacity.

I should also like to say how much my delegation appreciates the presence of eminent personalities of the subregion and of regional and subregional organizations, and how useful this discussion is for the future of the subregion. The Secretary-General's participation also represented an important contribution.

Before addressing specific subjects, I should like to say that my delegation appreciates the extremely positive role played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on behalf of peace and stability in the subregion. Once again, we should like to express our support for the efforts of ECOWAS to promote peace, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire. In that regard, I should like to thank the current Chairman of ECOWAS, Ghanaian President John Kufuor, and the ECOWAS force in Côte d'Ivoire, who should be fully supported in their efforts by the international community.

It is logical for the Security Council to devote special attention to the problems related to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the region of West Africa, because that is one of the world's regions that suffers most from the destabilizing accumulation of such weapons. Bulgaria expresses its grave concern at the excessive accumulation, illicit and uncontrolled proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which continue to be a major challenge to stability and development in West Africa. The uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons intensifies existing ethnic and political tensions, causes considerable loss of human life and weakens the international community's efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to civilian populations.

My country welcomes the integrated approach of the United Nations and of the Security Council aimed at reducing and preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as it relates to West Africa.

Bulgaria commends the more active cooperation among the region's countries, which represents an important element in the global strategy aimed at combating the illicit and uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Those countries already possess a tool to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons: the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa, adopted in 1998. The effectiveness and performance of that monitoring mechanism must be improved. My country encourages the countries of the region to implement the recommendations contained in the reports of the groups of experts on Liberia and Sierra Leone and to strengthen the implementation mechanisms, with a view to putting an end to the trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

The international community must lend consistent support to the efforts of the States of the region. It would be useful if the chairmanship of ECOWAS briefed the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1343 (2001) concerning Liberia on the actions that ECOWAS is undertaking to implement the Moratorium on light weapons. That occasion should contribute to the creation of conditions for more effective implementation of the Moratorium. Finally, I should like to say that Bulgaria supports and respects the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa.

The implementation of embargoes in force are also an important element of the global strategy to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in West Africa. We must say that the reports of the groups of experts on Sierra Leone and Liberia reveal similar violation schemes, often orchestrated by the same arms traffickers. As the Council is aware, the destabilizing activities of such individuals are not limited to the region of West Africa but extend far beyond it. My country believes that the Security Council must consider what the best way to tackle this reprehensible phenomenon would be. We believe that a structural change along the lines of the French-British idea of a semi-permanent mechanism is desirable, because that would better contribute to monitoring the

implementation of sanctions imposed by the United Nations.

The second element of our discussion today — the use of mercenaries in armed conflicts — is undeniably a threat to peace in the subregion. Mercenaries play a particularly nefarious role in conflicts in the subregion. We are all fully aware of the harmfulness of the activities of mercenaries in Côte d'Ivoire. The international community must examine and assess recent concentrations of mercenaries in Africa, particularly in the West African region. It is clear that the settlement of conflicts depends on the immediate demobilization of mercenaries.

In conclusion, I should like to say that my delegation fully supports the draft presidential statement that should be adopted following this debate, which is a useful contribution to efforts aimed at eradicating these threats.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Bulgaria for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Niger. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Moutari (Niger) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Mr. President, I should like to pay a warm tribute to the Republic of Guinea, your country, for the excellent work that it has accomplished in the presidency of the Security Council during this period, so critical for international peace and security.

Niger is pleased to see members of the Council devote today to a debate on the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries in West Africa. Her Excellency Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Niger, had wished to be present and to discuss with Council members this issue, whose importance led our heads of State and Government to proclaim, in 1998, a Moratorium on these types of weapons in West Africa. Unfortunately, having been unable to make the trip to New York for scheduling reasons, she asked me to convey to you her friendly greetings and her best wishes for success.

Because of its geographical location and its recent national experience, Niger feels not only that it is an integral part of all initiatives taken in this area but also that the path we have followed, with the benevolent help of countries and friendly institutions, can provide some useful examples within the framework of preventing and resolving conflicts, as well as the consolidation of peace and reconstruction in the post-conflict period.

As the Council knows, Niger is familiar with armed rebellion. It began as early as the 1990s and has affected a substantial portion of our territory, including the northern areas of Aïr and Azawak, and, in the eastern part of the country, Manga.

Our national experience teaches us that, whatever one might say about the illicit proliferation of arms and the use of mercenaries, the pivotal point in the quest for solutions is, first of all, a genuine will on the part of the national protagonists to deal peacefully with the deep-seated reasons for the conflicts they face. Foreign assistance in this way is certainly very useful, even essential, but it is still just assistance. Thanks to an understanding on the part of the different national actors in Niger, peace agreements were signed between April 1995 and August 1998 between the Government and 17 fronts and self-defence movements, with the help of friendly countries, including Algeria, Burkina Faso, France and Chad. These agreements have allowed us to begin the procedure to collect and destroy small arms and light weapons. This procedure finally led to the organization on 15 September 2000 in Agadez of a peace torch, with the presence of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, to whom I once again would like to convey my deep gratitude.

Then there was the design and implementation of the project to collect small arms and light weapons in the Gigme area in Manga. This was done thanks to help from the United Nations and the group of interested States — Germany, France, Norway and Japan — who were trying to breathe hope into that part of Niger. From its outset, this project was designed and perceived as a pilot project, the success of which would enable us to progress and the experience of which was to be replicated in other parts of the country. It was concerned with places such as Aïr and Azawak, but as it spread out in concentric circles, it was also meant to link with other projects going on in the rest of West Africa so as to ensure that similar initiatives would be eventually implemented in other member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Along these lines, a new project to consolidate peace has just been crafted by Niger, in partnership with the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP), with the United Nations Volunteers and with French cooperation, in order to reintegrate 3,160 ex-combatants to promote a culture of peace and development in areas affected by conflict.

Our national experience in Niger has thus brought us to a full implementation of peace agreements and to make it a major priority. From this perspective, the socio-economic reintegration of the ex-combatants was a priority for us, without which the peace process could not be successfully concluded, because the feeling of abandonment, due to the fact that financial promises had not been kept, made people impatient, and even fed up. They did not really wish to progress; rather, this led to armed banditry situations. This project, valued at about 1,400 million CFA francs (about $2 million), has been submitted to the donors for their consideration.

In addition, it seems to us that one of the shortcomings that has to be corrected as soon as possible is the weakness of the national structures responsible for follow-up of the collection of small arms and light weapons, as well as the reintegration of ex-combatants and the reconstruction of the affected areas.

Our national commission to collect these weapons, and our high commission for peacekeeping, are cruelly short of human, logistical and financial resources that are essential for them just to carry out the everyday work of their mission. Strengthening national institutions is necessary. It is a basic need for us. The same can be said for the regional level, as Mr. Chambas reminded us this morning.

ECOWAS has an urgent need to establish a small arms unit to provide for the effective implementation of the Moratorium. As was also pointed out by Ambassador Said Djinnit, of the African Union, a Moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of weapons can only function if there is a follow-up oversight mechanism adequately resourced and truly independent; this would allow them to point out and name the violators, as well as impose a sanctions regime against the parties in default.

We truly hope that recommendations will emerge from this workshop that will strengthen the national capacity-building of the national, regional and continental institutions that are to work against the scourges of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries.

Finally, the Regional Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) told us this morning how small the number of resources are that they have to work with, in spite of the ever more urgent needs of the States in the region. It is important, therefore, that one of our recommendations speak specifically to the need for strengthening our financial wherewithal to do our work.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Niger for his kind words addressed to me and to my country.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First and foremost, Mr. President, I welcome you to New York in presiding over this important meeting. I also wish to extend a welcome to other Foreign Ministers of African countries and the representatives of regional and subregional organizations. I wish to thank them for their important speeches.

In recent years, the excessive accumulation of and rampant illicit trafficking in small weapons in Africa, especially in West Africa, have aggravated armed conflicts and turmoil in these regions. Through their prolonged presence in these regions, mercenaries have not only been involved in armed conflicts but also have been engaged in the trafficking of arms and the plundering of resources, thus further exacerbating and prolonging the conflicts.

In the absence of an effective resolution of this issue, peace will remain illusive in Africa, especially in West Africa. The international community should give greater attention to this issue and support and assist regional and subregional organizations in combating the illicit trade in small weapons and the use of mercenaries.

The Chinese delegation believes that only an integrated approach, with a regional dimension, can effectively solve the question of small arms and mercenaries in West Africa. Therefore, better coordination and cooperation among members of the community, especially among the West African countries, are of critical importance. As a matter of priority, the countries concerned in this region should, in accordance with the Programme of Action adopted by the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the

importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons, develop an update of their domestic legislation on the manufacture, possession, transfer and stockpiling of small arms in their countries, in light of their specific circumstances, and take effective and reliable measures to ensure their scrupulous implementation.

The Security Council should continue to strengthen its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations; actively promote the West African peace process; implement disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in areas of conflict; and strengthen its monitoring of the enforcement of arms embargoes. From a long-term perspective, the international community — while remaining committed to assisting West African countries to eliminate tension and conflict — should actively help the countries of the region to develop their economies, pull themselves out of poverty and achieve sustainable development. That is the only approach capable of resolving the issue of small arms and mercenaries in West Africa at the root level and of restoring and safeguarding peace and security in the subregion.

China has always opposed the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in small arms, as well as the recruitment and use of mercenaries. We have great sympathy for the people of Africa, and especially for those of West Africa, who have long suffered from the proliferation of both small arms and mercenaries. China supports regional and subregional efforts aimed at resolving these issues. We also support strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the countries of the region. We are ready to work with the international community to reach an early and appropriate solution to the question of small arms and mercenaries in West Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of China for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Sierra Leone. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone): I wish to apologize for the absence of the Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone. He was looking forward to attending this meeting. Unfortunately, developments in his schedule did not make it possible for him to be here. I am therefore delivering this short statement on his behalf.

Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. In so doing, I am fully conscious of the fact that you are occupying the chair during one of the most disturbing — and indeed one of the most critical — periods that the world has faced in the last three decades. My delegation would therefore like to commend you for the admirable manner in which you have been performing your difficult task under extremely tense circumstances.

My delegation welcomes the initiative by Guinea, our good neighbour, to have the Security Council consider two interrelated issues that pose a serious threat to peace, human security and stability in the West African subregion. That initiative is timely because it reminds us of the efficacy of the Security Council, an organ whose primary responsibility is, and remains, the maintenance of international peace and security. Like every other man-made institution, the Council may have weaknesses. That notwithstanding, Sierra Leone continues to have faith in the United Nations as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations. We also have faith in the Council's ability to contribute to our collective effort to prevent, combat and eradicate the menace of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The current situation in the West African subregion compels us to reiterate to the Council and the international community at large that the illicit trade in and proliferation of those weapons, especially among roving bands of rebels that practice their deadly activities within and across national frontiers, is not merely a West African subregional problem. It is a problem that is inherently international. That will be the focus of my short contribution to today's discussions.

We of course realize that it is the responsibility of States of the subregion to take all necessary measures at the national and subregional levels to prevent, combat and eradicate these weapons. However, we cannot, and should not, underestimate the international or global dimension of the problem and its implications for international peace and security. The characteristics of proliferation clearly indicate that national and regional measures are not enough to deal with the problem. Such measures and initiatives must be

strengthened through sustained and effective international cooperation.

Members of the Security Council may wish to comment on this and, if time permits, perhaps suggest how best the Council can further contribute to the implementation of the global measures already identified in the Programme of Action of the 2001 United Nations Conference held to promote the prevention, reduction and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

We acknowledge the critical role that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes play in that regard. In Sierra Leone the success of our disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants, followed by the equally successful community arms collection and destruction campaign, was due primarily to the level of international assistance and cooperation extended to the Government and people of Sierra Leone. However, I should add that unless such cooperation is accelerated with regard to the reintegration component of the DDR programme, many ex-combatants could easily be recruited to fight in new and ongoing conflicts in the subregion. We recall that the Programme of Action of the 2001 Conference on small arms called for international assistance and cooperation in support of DDR programmes, as well as arms for development projects in post-conflict areas.

Much ground has already been covered with regard to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, which has been extended for a further three-year period. It is obviously in the interest of the member States of ECOWAS to scrupulously implement the Moratorium. The idea of extending it indefinitely or making it a legally binding regional instrument could also be in the interest of the Community. However, the fact is that virtually all the estimated 8 million illicit small arms in circulation in West Africa, including those that are in the hands of rebels, bandits and other non-State entities, were manufactured outside the West African subregion.

Therefore, the implementation of the ECOWAS Moratorium and similar regional initiatives should be seen in the context of continued collaboration between ECOWAS and arms-manufacturing States. The implementation of the Moratorium should also be considered in the context of efforts aimed at securing legally binding international agreements on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons. In the view of my delegation, those are core issues that must be actively pursued if we are to make any significant progress in curbing the illicit transfer and trade in these weapons. As part of the global approach, due consideration should continue to be given to the question of the adequacy of existing machinery to deal with the related problem of brokering.

Recognizing the importance of these issues, the Security Council had requested the Secretary-General to include in last year's report on small arms, among other things, an analytical assessment of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in such areas as availability, lines of supply, brokering, transportation arrangements and financial networks for these weapons. Again, this underscores the fact that the responsibility for dealing with controlling the illicit circulation of these weapons in the West African subregion is not ours alone.

Finally, several speakers have referred to the role of Security Council arms embargoes and similar measures in controlling the proliferation of these weapons. This is one area that falls directly within the responsibility of the Council.

By resolution 1171 (1998) the Government of Sierra Leone was required to mark, register and notify a Security Council monitoring committee of all arms or related material imported by the Government through named points of entry registered with that committee. The Government complied with those requirements. At the same time, the Council prohibited States and their nationals from supplying or selling arms to non-governmental forces in Sierra Leone. However, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel movement was able to acquire a considerable amount of arms and ammunition to maintain its vicious campaign of death and terror, with the direct and indirect support of a network of international and regional arms dealers. In short, the embargo was deliberately and successfully violated.

All my delegation can say at this stage is that in reviewing any existing arms embargo the Security Council should take into consideration the prevailing situation and any continued serious threat to peace and security in the West African subregion as a whole.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Let me at the outset welcome you, Sir, back amongst us in the Security Council. Your presence here to preside over the debate on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the phenomenon of mercenaries' threats to peace and security in West Africa is one indication of the importance of this issue to the region from which you hail.

I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to the Ministers from several other African States and to the representatives of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

We congratulate Guinea, our brother Ambassador Traoré and you yourself for the initiative to hold this meeting.

It is alarming that 8 million illicit small arms are in circulation in West Africa. Intra-State conflicts have created a staggering demand for small arms and have contributed to the continued proliferation of bandits, rebel groups, mercenaries, child soldiers and militia in the entire subregion. As was succinctly expressed by the Secretary-General in his opening remarks today, these problems sustain conflicts, hinder development, undermine human rights and humanitarian law and exacerbate violence, especially against women and children.

Pakistan was affected by the problem of small arms in the context of the Afghanistan war, which began in 1979. Two years ago, we adopted a comprehensive strategy to control and eliminate this problem. We have had considerable success, although this is not yet complete. Our campaign against illicit arms is continuing, but we would be happy to share our experiences with friendly countries.

We feel that the problems faced by West Africa are complex and multifaceted, affecting stability and peace within and outside individual countries. We need to address peace and stability in the entire subregion, not one country at a time. We agree with the assessment of the Secretary-General that efforts must be made to remove tensions between the concerned countries and also to find ways to collectively address their problems. To this effect, we fully support the efforts that have been made in ECOWAS and urge the United Nations to take a more proactive role to find a comprehensive solution to West Africa's problems.

Efforts must focus on the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. We also endorse several of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on small arms, submitted to the Security Council last year in document S/2002/1053.

With the adoption of the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons on 1 December 2000, the African Union articulated for the first time a continent-wide strategy for tackling illicit small arms on that continent. Similarly, the renewal by ECOWAS of its Moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small arms and light weapons last year is a sincere effort to address the issue.

The ECOWAS Moratorium can be strengthened through several of the recommendations that are reflected in the draft presidential statement before us, that is, through transparency, better end-user certificates, effective implementation of United Nations sanctions and well-conceived disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes. Arms-producing and exporting countries should also enact stringent laws and regulations to ensure that their exports to West Africa do not contribute to destabilizing the region. The implementation of DDR programmes in the affected countries needs generous financial support of the donor community.

We are facing what one could call a series of complex crises in West Africa and elsewhere. It is obvious that only a comprehensive approach that takes into account social, economic, political, security and other factors can address effectively the problems associated with small arms and light weapons. The international community should help deal with the complex causes of instability in West Africa. In particular, the economic and social problems afflicting the region must be tackled through comprehensive support for development, greater market access, debt relief, enhanced official development assistance, human resources development and a focused effort to eradicate HIV/AIDS.

We at the United Nations, and especially in the Security Council, need to devise a new composite method and a composite approach that draws together all those who can contribute to solutions to these complex crises in one place. I suggest that we discuss this composite approach in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, which already exists.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind words addressed to my country and my delegation.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria): Mr. President, I bring you warm greetings from your colleague, Mr. Alhaji Sule Lamido, Foreign Minister of Nigeria, who is unavoidably absent from this meeting. I wish to thank you on behalf of the Nigerian delegation for your initiative in organizing this important workshop. It affords the Security Council an excellent opportunity to fully address the menace posed by small arms and the use of mercenaries in the West African subregion. We look forward to a successful and fruitful conclusion of the workshop under your able guidance — and that is already near.

The problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is of particular concern to Nigeria because it constitutes a major impediment to peace, stability, security and economic development in many developing countries, especially in Africa. These arms continue to have devastating consequences on the African continent, considering their capacity to fuel, intensify and prolong conflicts. Sir, you are no doubt aware of the millions of lives lost, as well as the humanitarian crisis created in the region, as a result of their illicit use. I need not mention the destruction of catastrophic proportions of economic and social infrastructure on the continent as a direct result of the illicit use of these weapons. We know how long and how expensive it often is to put up such structures.

The West African subregion has more than its fair share of these conflicts. These conflicts have been fuelled by the illicit and free circulation of these weapons in the subregion.

The greatest difficulty in the control of the proliferation of small arms is their easy accessibility to non-State actors. That was an issue that dogged the outcome of the General Assembly debate on small arms and light weapons in 2001. My delegation therefore believes that for an adequate and effective control of the proliferation of this class of weapons, efforts must be made to legally control the sale of these weapons to non-State actors.

The illicit trade in small arms has always obstructed the implementation of arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council. The recent establishment of an independent panel of experts and monitoring mechanisms by the Council to promote compliance with arms embargoes is welcome.

While in West Africa this measure will be useful in controlling the illegal cross-border movement of small arms into conflict areas, it will be, however, ineffective in controlling and eliminating those arms that are already inside the areas of conflict. We therefore emphasize the need for effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration mandates that include weapons collection, disposal and destruction.

In order to trace the flow of small arms and light weapons from their sources, it is necessary to identify the points of diversion into illicit networks. Tracing the movement of these weapons will help to promote awareness and accountability in arms transfers and will deter their illicit transfer to non-State actors. We welcome the recommendation of the Secretary-General to develop an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons that enter their countries so that they can effectively control such inflows. We hope that the ongoing work of the group of experts on tracing small arms will ultimately lead to a legally-binding international agreement on the subject.

As an additional measure in ensuring success in this regard, it is important that licensed manufacturers apply appropriate and reliable markings on each small arm and light weapon as an integral part of the production process, as stipulated in the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Efforts should be put in place to ensure that the United Nations Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, which was successfully concluded in 2001, will complement the Programme of Action in this vital area when it enters into force.

Recent studies have shown that arms brokering plays a significant role in the illicit arms trade. The establishment of an effective international regime to control the practice has therefore become necessary. We call on Member States to fully abide by their commitment to enhance international cooperation and the exchange of information as a prelude to the establishment of such a regime. That position was underscored in the 2000 Bamako Ministerial Declaration containing Africa's common position on small arms and light weapons.

This is connected with the issue of licensing and end-user controls. We believe that developing effective national, regional and international controls on export licensing and end use are crucial elements in ensuring that this trade remains under Government control and is not diverted to illicit markets or end users. In that regard, my delegation urges the Security Council to encourage States that have not already done so to introduce the use of authenticated end-user certificates as a means of monitoring the export and transit of small arms.

It is equally important for the Council to intensify efforts to investigate and to identify the link between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources. The determination of this linkage and the efforts to control the use of proceeds from illegal resources to fund the illicit arms trade have significantly brought the conflicts in the West African subregion to a successful end. Such investigation should of necessity apply to all areas of conflict in the West African subregion, where there is often interlinkage between one conflict situation and another.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa has been in existence since 1998, following its renewal two years ago. ECOWAS member States will continue their best effort to ensure the success of the Moratorium. It is unfortunate that conflict situations have persisted in the West African subregion in spite of the Moratorium. ECOWAS member States need the cooperation of the international community to implement the Moratorium. My delegation therefore wishes once again to call on the international community to support the implementation of the Moratorium. In order to succeed, it is important that the Moratorium is fully respected by all States, both within and outside the subregion. We also urge other regions to follow the example of ECOWAS by imposing similar moratoriums in their respective regions.

Nigeria has always believed in conflict prevention measures and the pursuit of negotiated solution to conflicts as the most effective means of solving the small arms problem. The international community should pay particular attention to the need to adopt these measures as the best strategy for peace. Connected to this is the need for the creation of a good political atmosphere that will enhance harmonious relationships in our countries and a sense of belonging. The emphasis in this regard should be on promoting structures and processes that strengthen democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance, as well as economic recovery and growth as a means of eliminating conflicts and guaranteeing durable peace. The task of the Security Council in this regard is quite enormous and calls for genuine commitment and concerted action on the part of the Council.

I cannot conclude this statement without expressing our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his bold initiative in establishing the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) as a mechanism for the harmonization of the activities of United Nations agencies to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action. CASA has a special role to play in promoting and coordinating assistance to West African States, especially those most severely affected by small arms proliferation. We also note with satisfaction the recent establishment of the Small Arms Advisory Services to provide advisory services and formulate programmes on small arms for implementation. As these two bodies rely on extrabudgetary resources to fund their activities, we call on Member States in a position to do so to make voluntary contributions to enable them to fulfil their mandates.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Côte d'Ivoire. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Djangone-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): First let me say that my delegation is very happy to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the

Security Council in March 2003, which has witnessed the establishment of the Government of National Reconciliation under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

Things have never been so difficult for the international community, as current challenges, to which pressures are added, are numerous and seem insurmountable.

However, assured by your excellent qualities of diplomatic experience, we do not doubt for one moment that the proceedings of this distinguished institution will be completed successfully.

We would also like to congratulate the representative of Germany who, last month, conducted the work of the Council with the great competence we know he possesses.

I would like to begin my statement by saying that my delegation approves of most of the recommendations that have been made, particularly those by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Senegal and Benin. Since almost everything has already been said, I will confine my statement to a few words about the existence of so-called Liberian fighters supposedly in the Côte d'Ivoire army. In fact, this morning, in his statement to the Security Council, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia stated, without providing a shred of evidence and in spite of the denial of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire that was published by a number of press agencies, that particularly in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire, Liberian mercenaries were fighting alongside the national army of Côte d'Ivoire.

It is highly regrettable that Liberia has turned this workshop that has been so carefully organized into a trial against Côte d'Ivoire. In a spirit of peace, and despite the averred collusion of fraternal countries with the aggressors against Côte d'Ivoire, my country has not deemed it necessary to pour oil on the fire by publicly denouncing anybody. We are trying to prepare the post-crisis period, given that teeth and tongues are condemned to live together, in spite of the accidents along the way.

Given the falsehoods related by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia aimed at distracting the international community, my delegation would like to issue the following clarification.

We do not know the sources of the representative of Liberia. However, the truth is that Liberian mercenaries are part of the aggressors against Côte d'Ivoire and have been since the night of 18 to 19 September 2002. All the diplomatic Missions were able to see on Ivorian television Liberian mercenaries, among others, that the national armed forces had taken prisoners after heavy fighting. Some of those mercenaries even admitted that they belonged to the Liberian army. President Charles Taylor assured President Gbagbo that those mercenaries had no connection with the Liberian army. The Ivorian authorities noted that. At any rate, if they are not soldiers of the Liberian army, then they are Liberian mercenaries.

There can be no doubt, because the English accent of Liberia is quite different from that of the other anglophone countries in West Africa. The majority of those mercenaries can be easily confused with the border populations of Côte d'Ivoire, given that they speak the same languages and are part of the same ethnic groups as those populations.

To then say that Liberia mercenaries are Ivorians is a large step to take — a step that the critics of Côte d'Ivoire, including the Minister, blithely took.

My delegation vigorously protests such fabrications that attempt to present the victim of aggression, Côte d'Ivoire, as being the culprit in this matter.

A number of Liberian mercenaries have come from the ranks of armed groups that are trying to overthrow President Taylor's regime. Those Liberian mercenaries, who have fanned out across West Africa and are currently aggressing against Côte d'Ivoire, can be defined in terms of the following paradigm. First, they are, for the most part, totally under the control of a drug empire. Secondly, they are merciless. Thirdly, they systematically pillage plantations, houses, and so forth.

Fourthly, they kill indiscriminately; one could even say that they kill for the fun of it, which explains why there are so many mass grave sites in rebel areas. Fifthly, they have no regard for women and girls, whom they rape on a daily basis.

The Liberian Ministry of Foreign Affairs certainly forgot that since that fraternal country has been unstable — which has been for at least a decade — Côte d'Ivoire has taken in refugees; at times half a million people have been accepted. The United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees can testify to that.

There is one specific thing that should be pointed out. Contrary to what is done elsewhere, instead of putting people into camps in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberian refugees are received by families and integrated into the population. At the meeting in Serta, Libya, my country was congratulated by the African Union for that hospitality, which was described as being second to none.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia certainly forgot to point out to the Security Council that, for more than a decade, the combatants of the various factions fleeing the fighting were coming into Ivorian territory with their supplies of arms and have largely contributed to the insecurity that is undermining my country today, and which is characterized by ambushes, hold-ups and other acts.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia certainly does not know that, before the aggression that we are talking about, Côte d'Ivoire did not hesitate to send regular teams of military doctors and medicines to Liberia.

The list is long. Therefore, allow my delegation to conclude with the following. Contrary to partisan reports that have been made to the Council by actors who are destabilizing Côte d'Ivoire, first, Liberian mercenaries that are spreading desolation in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire have no connection with the regular army; they should in no way be considered as extra recruits of the national armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire. Secondly, in the western part of the country, as well as at Bouaké, Liberian mercenaries, recruited and paid by the aggressors against Côte d'Ivoire, are fighting alongside and are on the payroll of the latter.

Thirdly, Liberian thieves are acting independently, profiting from this situation in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire. Fourthly, Liberian mercenaries arrested by the French forces in the region of Duekoué Bangolo have no connection with the regular forces of Côte d'Ivoire. That is the truth that the international community should know.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Côte d'Ivoire for the kind words he addressed to me.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea.

In the historic Declaration of the Millennium Summit, the world's leaders, meeting here in New York, affirmed their willingness to work to establish a climate of peace and security, the fundamental basis for a partnership for sustainable development. Today, we must recognize that the international community seems to demonstrate a certain impotence in the face of numerous human tragedies and the destruction of socio-economic infrastructures, the consequences of the persistence of many flashpoints of tension in the world.

For more than a decade, West Africa, the theatre of several conflicts, has been a subject of great concern because of its disturbing number of refugees and displaced persons. The causes of this instability have been diagnosed many times, but the remedies have not always been applied to restore peace and calm for the people of the subregion. Today, the constantly growing number of unemployed youth and the consequences of conflicts are fertile ground for the development of this phenomenon. The use of child soldiers also results from these deep-seated causes.

Faced with this new threat, what remedies should be proposed to eradicate this scourge? Undoubtedly, the domestic conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and recently in Côte d'Ivoire have had deplorable consequences, both for those countries and for neighbouring States, jeopardizing the subregional balance.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the increasingly frequent recourse to mercenarism are unlikely to enhance the restoration of peace and security in West Africa. The Ivorian crisis is an unfortunate illustration. While it is recognized that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is not in itself the cause of these armed conflicts, it has nonetheless been established that it helps to exacerbate them. The joining of such proliferation with the use of mercenaries today constitutes factors of destabilization and insecurity in West Africa.

The holding of this interactive workshop has been to the point, because it has undoubtedly enabled us to measure the impact of these scourges and to provide the necessary incentives to eradicate them. In other words, we must proceed to an in-depth consideration of the mechanisms that underlie these phenomena, and we must adopt appropriate measures with a view to both prevention and elimination.

The conclusions of previous studies and debates on these issues confirm the gravity of the danger and the scope of the damage caused in West Africa in particular. It is, in fact, deplorable to note that 500 million light weapons are circulating freely in the world — 30 million of them in Africa and 8 million in West Africa. Even worse, 60 per cent of these weapons are held by civilians, of whom approximately 500,000 die each year; 80 per cent of these victims are women and children.

That somber tableau surely explains the feeling that, in Africa, guns are not only weapons of choice, but weapons with devastating effects. My delegation is concerned by the uncontrolled and abusive use of small arms and light weapons, which affect the public resources of our States — already very limited — and the implementation of development programmes. We are of the view that this form of governance has as its corollary the flight of foreign capital and disinvestment.

Moreover, we must recognize that the moderate cost of these weapons and the fact that they are easy to use and to acquire explain their possession by everyone, including children, who are often recruited against their will for armed conflicts. Guinea subscribes to the view that these conditions dangerously compromise the implementation of peace agreements in the subregion, whose failure is often attributed solely to the absence of political will. How, in fact, can those agreements be effectively implemented when the subregion is more concerned with its safety and stability? Taking that factor into account is a matter of moral fairness.

We admit that, besides the weak capacity of security forces, unemployment and poverty promote the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In that regard, several initiatives have been undertaken, in vain, to eradicate this scourge. In October 1998, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a Declaration of Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa for a renewable three-year period. In order to accelerate implementation of the Moratorium, an action plan for the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) was adopted in March 1999, thanks to the cooperation of the United Nations system. Despite the slowness observed in the establishment of national commissions, years after the adoption of the Moratorium, some progress deserves to be emphasized: to date, 13 national commissions have been created. Nevertheless, increased assistance by the United Nations system is required to make them more operational.

We understand that the difficulties encountered in the effective functioning of the ECOWAS Moratorium are also attributable to the absence of effective and efficient cooperation among States to harmonize their policies; to insufficient personnel and equipment at the ECOWAS secretariat level to oversee implementation of the Moratorium; and to the absence of binding legal provisions.

Therefore, my delegation remains convinced that we need to strengthen the subregion's institutional capacities, ensuring a long-term fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, by taking the following elements into account: the introduction of a standardized end-user certificate in the subregion; the broadening of the Moratorium with the goal of creating a mechanism for the exchange of information on all types of weapons acquired by the States of the subregion, as well as on deliveries made by the countries exporting them; the computerization of aircraft registration lists, in conformity with the provisions of the International Civil Aviation Organization Convention of 1944; the elaboration of national action plans; the increased involvement of national commissions and of local structures in the implementation of measures taken at the subregional, regional and international levels; and finally, the strengthening of unity of action to break the mafia mechanisms that feed weapons trafficking.

Guinea, for its part, has taken the following measures: the creation of a national commission on 18 August 2000; the elaboration of an action plan based on the nine priorities defined by PCASED; the introduction of legislation and of administrative procedures on arms possession, soon to be adopted; the establishment of a training and awareness programme for the Guinean army; and the holding of numerous symposiums, seminars and workshops and participation in those types of events with a view to gradually establishing a true culture of peace. Regardless of such efforts, the hoped-for success will essentially depend on the considerations that we have just cited.

My delegation notes — and deplores — the fact that people without faith or law, whose sole motivation

is enrichment, are selling their services today to parties in the same conflict. Members will agree with me that the degrading use of mercenaries has made the security situation of our States — already so worrisome — even more fragile. It has been proved that these mercenaries are, more and more often, turning soullessly against their own employers. That is to say, the common enemy of the States of the subregion is now mercenary activity. We must denounce those who order it or permit it. We must not forget that these mercenaries operate in motley groups of various nationalities, sometimes nurtured by former combatants who have never been taken in charge by disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

My country, the Republic of Guinea, has paid a heavy price for the use of mercenaries. It was the victim of aggressions in November 1970 and in September 2000, which enabled us to measure the danger of mercenary activity to a country's stability and security.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to invite the Security Council to ensure scrupulous compliance by all States of the subregion with measures taken against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries. Therefore, it is essential that our States give due consideration to the recommendations and observations that have resulted from this workshop, with a view to combating these scourges — an undeniable reality — and to ensuring a better future for coming generations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED), and I would ask him to give us a very brief assessment of our workshop.

Mr. Fall (*spoke in French*): I would like to start by commenting on the new recommendations having to do with the Plan of Action that has been drawn up and then list them in terms of the entities that would have to act to implement them. I think I would start by saying that the international community recognizes not only the importance of security in West Africa but also, unfortunately, the threats that have been highlighted here, in particular the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenaries.

Still, with respect to the international community, I think there is a need for it to support the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons — first of all, by supporting the national commissions responsible for this issue; secondly, by helping the Secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to strengthen its capacity in this domain; and, finally, of course, by coordinating development assistance within the United Nations system.

As regards the Council itself, we have noted the idea of having an embargo on light weapons in conflict areas. I think this was an early initiative launched here at a Security Council ministerial-level meeting by Mrs. Madeline Albright, former Secretary of State of the United States of America. I think this idea has come up again, and we should note it, while at the same time penalizing the mercenary operations in West Africa.

I also note the willingness to contain mercenary activities and proliferation through the adoption of appropriate legal instruments. Of course, the Security Council would need the assistance of the Conference on light weapons as regards the definition of standards and so forth.

Finally, there was mention of developing independent mechanisms, evaluation and sanctions. Of course, this mission would naturally fall under the auspices of the Security Council.

At the subregional level, specifically for PCASED and ECOWAS, two things are very important: improving the procedure for monitoring of import controls and the end-user certificates, and starting in the next semester, we will look at reviewing and improving these procedures as part of our agenda.

Finally, as regards ECOWAS, PCASED and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) together, I see the need to evaluate risks in the subregion and to report annually on arms trade flows and mercenary activities in the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) for his contribution.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2003/328, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, China, France, Germany, Guinea, Mexico, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1467 (2003).

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. I now invite Council members to informal consultations on Iraq, immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.